



The Secretary of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

April 26, 2006

MEMORANDUM FOR HEADS OF DEPARTMENTAL ELEMENTS

FROM: SAMUEL W. BODMAN

A handwritten signature of Samuel W. Bodman in black ink, written over the printed name.

SUBJECT: Improving Quality Assurance

Effective implementation of Quality Assurance (QA) programs is critical to achieving results and accomplishing the Department's mission. The Department has several examples where the quality of the work has negatively impacted the mission resulting in rework, delays, and cost growth, all in a time of limited resources. The Department must implement quality requirements to ensure that risks and negative environmental impacts are minimized and that safety, reliability, and performance are maximized through the application of effective management systems commensurate with the risks posed by the facility or activity and its work.

The Department has established QA regulations, policy, directives, and standards applicable to all DOE work. However, internal and external reviews conducted by the Department's Inspector General and the General Accountability Office document inconsistent implementation of quality assurance policies and principles. While QA programs are used at most of our field and contractor organizations, we have not yet developed a sustainable quality culture to achieve excellence in the quality of our products and services. To correct these weaknesses, I expect Departmental Elements to implement an effective QA program for the major programmatic activities for which they are responsible.

These QA programs must meet the requirements contained in applicable DOE policies, directives, and standards. The rigor of these programs should also correspond with the hazards and risks associated with the work being performed. In addition, these programs should reflect line management's responsibility in ensuring the implementation of quality assurance requirements.

All Departmental Elements are directed to report on their Quality Assurance implementation to the Office of Environment, Safety and Health (EH) by July 30, 2006. EH will provide guidance for the report by May 31, 2006. The purpose of these reports is to assess the status of the Department's QA programs and to identify areas in which improvements may be necessary.



The Office of Independent Oversight, within the Office of Security and Safety Performance Assurance, will continue to conduct independent assessments of Secretarial Officer, field elements, and contractor implementation of the DOE QA Rule and Order including the aspects of QA related to environment, safety, health, safeguards, and security.

I know that I can count on your strong support in fostering this change in our quality culture and improving the quality of our products and services to the Nation.

cc: Deputy Secretary Clay Sell